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## William C. Nelson to Maria C. Nelson (22 February 1863)

William Cowper Nelson

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Head Quarters Posey's Brigade,  
Near Fredericksburg Va. Feby 22<sup>nd</sup> 1863,

My Dearest Mother;

More than a month has elapsed since the hated invaders have left Holly Springs, and although most of the boys have heard from home long ere now, still no tidings have come for me, not a line have I received for more than three months. I hope and pray that no harm has befallen our precious little circle, but at times my heart has sad misgivings; that the Good Lord will watch over and protect us, in this, our day of tribulation is my constant prayer.

I have seen accounts in the papers, of the enormities committed by the Yankees, in our once beautiful town, I could not restrain feelings of the bitterest hatred, against those vile polluters of the sanctuary of the living God, and my heart yearned for the privilege of meeting in battle, those worse than heathen vandals; no cause with such supporters can or will prosper, they can meet with nothing but inevitable defeat, in every undertaking, though for a time they may be successful, a just retribution will surely overtake them,

I have heard that nearly all the houses in Holly Springs were burnt, I am afraid that ours did not escape the general doom, I also very much fear that the negroes have all left, as I understand that the Yankees resorted to the artifice of lying to them, to frighten them away, when all other efforts had failed,



Our Army up here is still in statu quo, the Enemy do not seem disposed to molest, and we have no inclination to intrude upon their privacy. It is believed that they have withdrawn the greater portion of their force from our front, and that they will probably make their next advance upon Richmond from the "South-Side" of the James river, via Suffolk and Petersburg. Our Army is also in motion, some troops have already left here, our Division received orders last week to send all our heavy baggage to Richmond, and we expected to have followed ere this, but the extreme inclemency of the weather has thus far prevented us, and it is now impossible to say, when we can move; last Tuesday we had a heavy fall of snow, followed by a driving sleet and rain, which rendered the roads almost impassible for wagons. The past two days were clear and beautiful, and in a few days the roads would have been passable, but last night another snow-storm set in, which has continued with but slight intermission to the present time, (3 P.M.) and now "full knee-deep lies the winter snow," but we are comfortably situated, and little reck how the wind blows, or the white flakes fall; most of the troops have built themselves log-huts, and keep as warm as you please, they really present (uncouth as is the style of architecture) quite a picturesque appearance, as I look out on them, scattered around upon the whitened hill-sides, I can but recall pictures



I have seen in years gone by, of Winter-Quarters at Valley-Forge, in the first Revolution, when Washington shared the hardships of war, with his hardy followers. The cause now is just as holy, and our soldiers have the same spirit of endurance, which animated the hearts of their forefathers, and with such feelings, we can but conquer. I do not look for a speedy termination of the war, but I do think that the worst has passed, that we are seeing the "beginning of the end," but Mother you would probably rather hear something about me individually than about war, and Rumors of war, I will therefore give you an insight into my daily life, I have a good tent with a stove in it, a table and several chairs, a nice straw bed, and plenty of blankets, I generally rise about 4 o'clock, when the weather is good exercise for an half-hour or so, then breakfast, after which look over the papers and reports which are sent to Head Quarters, carry them to the General for his Approval (or Disapproval, then mount the Guard, (a very interesting proceeding) the rest of the morning I generally devote to reading, unless there are Orders to be issued, dine about two, P.M. and in the afternoon I generally take a ride, at night I read again, and so the days pass off, I never let a day pass without reading in my Bible, I commenced reading it through on my 21<sup>st</sup> Birth-day. I am now reading Job in the Old Testament, and II Corinthians in the New, I expect to finish it before the year is out.



The duties of my position as Ordnance Officer, are very light, and so I have plenty of time for the duties of the Adjutant General's Department. The General's sons have not arrived as yet, and it is probable that I will continue to perform "Double-duty" for several weeks to come, but there is a vast difference between soldiering as a private, and as an officer, I served a long apprenticeship however, and I think am somewhat entitled to a little ease now.

I have bought me a horse, for which I paid \$275, that will take several months pay, equipments and an uniform add another hundred or more to my expenses, I have hired a boy, for \$5 Dollars per month, so you see there is very little prospect of my making a fortune, still I hope to clear expenses, I don't intend to be extravagant, but I must keep up appearances.

It may be that we will remain here for several weeks, or we may go to Richmond or Petersburg, as soon as the weather permits, this week may hap. By directing your letters to my address, "Care Genl. Porey, Andersson's Division, they will most likely reach me. Love to all friends, This is the fifth letter I have written home, since receiving one there from. Good-bye, Capt. Worme, Jimmy Crump Your loving Son and Frank Smith are also well, Wills, B, Nelson,